ETHEL'S EXPECTATIONS; OR, A MOTHER'S MISTAKE.

BY EMMA LESLIE,

Author of "Bolingbroke's Folly," "Gerald's Dilemma," etc., etc.

"'What is my mother saying?' he asked." P. 35.

CHAPTER III.

DOROTHY'S VENTURE.

ETHEL undoubtedly expected that her visit to the Manor House would be extended indefinitely, and she took great pains to please the fidgety old man; but it did not suit him to have her there always, and so at the end of a week he gave her to understand that she must return home, and come again for a short time when he sent for her.

These visits grew to be rather frequent as time went on; but though Ethel might enjoy them, they involved Mrs. Maldon in expenses she could not afford, and she had to incur debts which caused her great trouble and anxiety.

Tom and Dorothy held councils repeatedly about this; for before the first year of their life at the cottage was over, they knew that they were sinking into debt and difficulty, and how to help was the problem they set themselves to solve.

At last Tom went to Mr. Mason and told him that he must try to earn some money to help his mother, and that gentleman so sympathised with him in this desire as to write to a friend who was manager to a firm of chemists at a distance, recommending Tom for a situation that happened to be vacant in the establishment.

When Tom knew he had been chosen to fill the vacancy, he told his mother what he had done; and the very same evening Dorothy came home from a visit to the Wests', eager to obtain her mother's consent to her going out as junior teacher in a school.

"Mrs. Westlake—Mrs. West's sister—keeps a ladies' school at Crofton, and she wants a young lady to teach the little ones," she began.

"At Crofton, did you say?" put in Tom, eagerly. "Why, that is where *I* am going, Dollie. I have got a situation there, and they will pay me fifty pounds a year."

"At Crofton? Then, mother, you must please let me go to take care of Tom," said Dorothy, quickly. "Mrs. West says it will be a splendid opening for me, and Mrs. Westlake will treat me as she would Minnie, her own niece."

But the idea of parting with two of her children like this was exceedingly painful to the widow. "I have consented to let Tom go because he is a boy, and it will not hurt him to go out in the world," she said.

"And it will not hurt me, mother," replied Dorothy, pleadingly. "You see, mother dear, we must do something. It will cost less to keep two than four, and we may be able to send you some money to pay off those dreadful bills."

"My dear, my dear, how can I let you go? What would your dear papa say if he could know his little Dorothy had to go out in the world like this?" sobbed Mrs. Maldon, for she was terribly upset at the idea of her son and daughter leaving home.

"But, mamma, I have learnt to do many things during the last year, so that it will not be nearly so hard for me as it would have been at first, and I am sure papa would say it was my duty to help you all I could."

"Oh, Dorothy, we might have been so comfortable here, I thought. Do you remember the first time we came to

look at the cottage, how Ethel planned this and that, to make things cosy, so that we might not miss some of the comforts we had been used to?"

"Yes, I remember; but that was before she knew of Mr. Sutherland's intentions respecting herself. That altered everything for us, and Ethel has never been the same since. I am sure if anything could have made her think of you instead of herself, it would have been the worry you have had over the bills lately; and that is why I want to take this chance of earning something to help you, for it might not happen again that I should be able to live near Tom."

"That is a great consideration, dear, for Tom is young to go away from home to live in lodgings, and of course to have you near him will be a great help and comfort, though I shall miss you both sadly."

"Of course, if we go away, Ethel must stay at home more," said Dorothy, "and that will be good for her now, so that I am sure it will be better for everybody; and you will write and tell me how much more comfortable things are here than when I was at home," she added pleadingly.

Whether Mrs. Maldon was convinced by these arguments or not, she saw the wisdom and necessity of her younger children doing something to earn their own living, and painful as it might be for her to part with them, she yielded her consent to the arrangements that had been made for this.

It had been anything but a happy home for everybody lately. Tom had resented the way in which his mother and younger sister were treated by the expectant heiress, hence quarrels were of frequent occurrence between them when Ethel was at home, and this always drove Mrs. Maldon to take her elder daughter's part, though she knew Ethel was more to blame.

This disunion was making Tom hard and bitter, so that Dorothy was right in saying it would be better for everybody if Tom could go away—for a time at least.

Mrs. Maldon went to see Mrs. Westlake before she returned to Crofton, and it was arranged that she should look out for lodgings for Tom, and the brother and sister should go to her the following week.

The parting between Mrs. Maldon and her children was a painful one, and Dorothy was almost heartbroken at last; but by the time Crofton was reached she had begun to feel hopeful and cheerful once more, and she and Tom were wondering what their new homes would be like, and what the future held in store for them.

Mrs. Westlake welcomed them very cordially, and told them she had heard of lodgings that she thought Tom would like.

"Mrs. Greenslade is a widow with an only son. She lives in a pretty cottage outside the town, but not very far from your brother's place of employment. When you have rested and had some tea, we will go and see her, for, of course, we could not settle matters until she had seen you, and you had seen the place. She has never had a lodger before, and she was not sure that her son would like it; so we must go as soon as tea is over, in case we may have to look further."

But Mrs. Greenslade was quite satisfied with the appearance of Tom and his sister.

"I must speak to my son about it, though," she said. "He has the management of Lord Mount's estate, and this cottage is on his land."

But while they were talking matters over, and almost before Mrs. Greenslade had done speaking, her son came in. In a few words she explained to him the subject under discussion, and he seemed to be very pleased at the prospect of having a companion in his home.

When Mrs. Westlake told them where their guests came from, mother and son looked at each other curiously; but they did not say that they knew the town or anyone living there, and so no notice was taken of this at the time.

On the following Sunday, however, when Tom called for his sister to go to church with him, he said, "The people where I live are relations of old Mr. Sutherland. I wish he had thought of these instead of making our Ethel his heiress, and so turning her head."

"You did not say anything about that to Mrs. Greenslade, did you?" said Dorothy, quickly.

"No, of course not. You surely don't think me such a goose as to go talking to strangers about our private affairs? Not that they seem like strangers now," added Tom, "for Horace is such a nice, sensible fellow that I feel as if I had known him all my life. Oh, by the way, Mrs. Greenslade told me to ask you to come to tea this afternoon, if Mrs. Westlake can spare you. How are you getting on, Dollie?" he added.

"Better than I expected, Tom. Of course, I only teach the little ones, and it is patience that is required more than anything else to manage them. I think God must have guided us here, for I never thought I could be so comfortable away from home."

"But don't you think God would still be caring for us if we had not been so fortunate?" asked Tom. "You see, I was saying something like that to Horace last night, and he said God would still be guiding and caring for us, though things might not be so pleasant. He said God might lead us into certain circumstances to teach us something of our own nature that we might not suspect lay hidden until these circumstances brought it out. I thought of Ethel—for whoever dreamed she could be so selfish and disagreeable?—and then I knew what he said was true."

"But—but I think we ought to be very thankful that we have found such comfortable homes here, Tom," persisted Dorothy.

"Oh yes, of course, dear; and I'm very glad Mrs. Westlake is so nice, and that you don't have to work so hard, for you have had a rough time at home lately. I wonder how Lady Lofty gets on now without you to wait upon her? I hope mother won't do it," he added.

"Oh, Ethel must help now I have come away from home. That was one reason why I came, that she might be compelled to think of something besides being a rich woman by-and-by. I wish we could just have a peep at mother now," added Dorothy, with something like a sigh.

"I wonder whether Lady Lofty takes her a cup of tea in the mornings, as you used to do?" put in Tom.

It was getting upon dangerous ground to discuss the doings at home, for Dorothy could not join in the wholesale condemnation of her sister, and more than once she and Tom had quarrelled over this; so she hastened to turn the conversation now by asking some question about his new friends.

"Have you heard in what way they are related to old Mr. Sutherland?" she asked.

"Oh, Horace told me all about it. He said his father's cousin, an eccentric old man named Sutherland, lived somewhere near where we came from, and then of course I said papa used to attend him and was a friend of his."

"What did he say to that?" asked Dorothy.

"He only laughed and said the world was very small,

for it never seemed as if he could get far away from this old cousin, though he had never seen him."

They reached the church door at this point, and there was no opportunity of renewing the conversation afterwards; for Mrs. Westlake and Horace Greenslade joined them when church was over, and then the arrangement was made that Dorothy should go and take tea with her brother that afternoon.

When tea was over, and Mrs. Greenslade could conveniently speak to Dorothy, she said, "I should like you to tell me what sort of a man Mr. Sutherland is, for I understand that you know him, Miss Maldon, and he is a total stranger to us, although he is a cousin of my late husband's. The fact is, he was offended because my husband did not marry a lady he had chosen for him, and so when he heard of our marriage he wrote to say he would never see nor write to my husband again, and he never did. Last week, however, he wrote, through his lawyer, and asked Horace to pay him a visit, and I think he ought to do so; but I cannot make Horace understand that it is his duty to go and see him now, as he never troubled to inquire about my son's father when he was living."

"I think I should rather incline to Mr. Horace's opinion," replied Dorothy, "though everybody knows that Mr. Sutherland is very odd."

"Well, my dear young lady, I might say the same, but I suppose you have heard that he is wealthy—he holds all the family estate in Scotland, and has no relative nearer than my son; so that I think in his own interest he ought to forget me in the matter, and go and see him. What do you think?"

Poor Dorothy looked half scared; what could she say? It was just like the perverse old man to seek for another heir, especially if Ethel had not been able to please him in all his whims and fads lately.

Before she could reply Horace himself joined them in their walk round the garden. "What is my mother saying?" he asked. "Inquiring into the character of that perverse old cousin of mine?"

"I have been telling Miss Maldon that you ought to go and see him. Why, if you had an estate of your own you could carry out all the improvements upon it you want to do here."

"I have heard that Mr. Sutherland's property is sadly neglected," said Dorothy, seeing she was expected to say something.

"Then I am sure it is your duty to go and see this old man, Horace, though he does dislike your mother," said Mrs. Greenslade.

"You must give me time to think of it all round before I decide. It is just possible that I might not be able to get away from here, you know," he added.

"There would not be any difficulty about that, I think, if you spoke to Lord Mount, and told him whom you were going to see."

"And that my mother was exceedingly anxious I should go," laughed the young man.

Dorothy was very glad to escape the necessity of talking about the matter, and was not sorry when Tom announced that it was time for them to set off to church.

They went by themselves this evening, and as soon as they were on their way Tom began to talk of what they had heard. "You may depend old Mr. Sutherland means to make this young man his heir after all, and Lady Lofty will never be a grand lady. It will be the story of Humpty-Dumpty over again, as I used to tell her."

"Oh, Tom, Mr. Sutherland never could be so cruel," said Dorothy.

"Cruel?" repeated Tom. "You forget these Scotch estates they talk about have been in the family for generations, and as Mr. Greenslade is one of the family, he has a sort of right to them which Ethel certainly has not."

"But—but, Tom, do you think God would ever let such a thing as that happen?" said Dorothy, in a troubled voice; for though she had suffered much through her sister's folly, she could not bear to think that she might be disappointed of her hope. It would be such a trouble to her mother too, she knew; for she, like Ethel, had begun to look forward to what Mr. Sutherland's money was to do for them.

Dorothy's question set Tom thinking again of the talk he had had with his new friend the previous evening, and at last he said slowly, "I think it might be this way, Dollie. Of course, God loves Ethel, and He could see right down into her heart where this selfishness was hidden. While it was down there it never could be cured, any more than a disease that is latent in a person's constitution, as I have heard papa say sometimes. But if something happens to bring out the disease, so that a doctor can see what it is, there is a chance of curing it. Now, don't you think it may be the same with Ethel? God knew she was selfish inside though she seemed so kind, and to bring this out and let her and other people see what was amiss would be the kindest thing that could be done."

"But, Tom, mamma would be so disappointed too, if Mr. Sutherland should take up this young man, after all. Don't you think I had better write and tell mamma all about it?"

"What good would that do?" asked her brother. "Mother would only worry for fear it might be. Besides, we are not certain that Mr. Greenslade will go to his cousin within the next three months. He is a very independent young man, you can see, and though his mother seems to think a good deal about this property, I don't believe he cares a fig for it."

"And, after all, Mr. Sutherland may have enough to make Ethel rich and yet leave the Scotch estates to this relative," suggested Dorothy.

"That's what he means to do, perhaps," said Tom, who was anxious to set his sister's mind at rest upon this matter, in case she should write home such a letter as would fill his mother's mind with anxious fear; for how would they ever be able to pay their debts if Ethel should be disappointed of her hope concerning this money?

They went to church with their minds full of this fear, for though neither would mention it to the other, both were thinking of the same subject, and so to both the lesson of the service was very appropriate.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," was the text.

"We must put in practice what we have learnt to-night, Dollie," whispered Tom, as he left his sister at Mrs. Westlake's door. "It is no use worrying mother, or ourselves either, about Ethel and her fortune, but we can tell God all about it, and we may be sure He will do the best for all of us."

"Yes, yes, Tom; you and I will make this a matter of prayer between ourselves, and I hope we shall hear soon that Ethel is settling down comfortably with mamma. If she would only do that, it would not matter so much about Mr. Sutherland's money."

But before the next Sunday came, Ethel wrote to her

sister, saying she was obliged to leave home for a few days, and that she hoped Dorothy would write often, so that her mother might not miss her so much.

"I know you will say I ought to stay and help mamma with the house, but I have heard that Mr. Sutherland has found a nephew or some such relation lately, and so you will see that I cannot afford to neglect him if we are to pay our debts and live comfortably in the future."

Dorothy did not show this letter to Tom, but she took care to write to her mother every day and tell her all that was likely to interest her in her new life. She did not have to work so hard now as she had done at home, but still her time was fully occupied; for when school was over in the afternoon, there were the elder girls' exercises to look through and correct, and Dorothy found this even more tedious than teaching her class of little ones. It took her a long time at first to do this, for her own grammar and arithmetic had to be looked up as she went on; but Mrs. Westlake was very kind and considerate, and contrived that her young assistant had a walk every day, and she and Tom generally managed to meet once or twice in the week, besides spending part of each Sunday together.

Dorothy made no mention in her letters home of the Greenslades being related to Mr. Sutherland, for she was afraid that if she once entered upon this topic she might say too much; while her mother was evidently a little anxious at the rumour of a nephew having been lately discovered, and it was not advisable to increase this anxiety, especially as it was still uncertain whether Horace would pay the desired visit.

(*Continued on page* 49.)

SISTER PRISCILLA.

BY MRS. SKINNER.

"GOOD stuff goes into little parcels" is a saying which has comforted many a small person. Good stories are equally compressible. There are many women in the sunny land above with whom I should like a good long talk, so that we might compare experiences; but amongst them all I think I should pick out first "Sister Priscilla," as I love to call her. Hers was a story that went into very few lines. There are those whose lives had more romance in them, who lived in grander state, who had better opportunities, but none who knew more of a woman's troubles, and who could sympathise more with those who, struggling with straitened circumstances, yet long to make their lives sublime.

Every woman wins for herself some title, though many are happily unconscious of what their titles are. Some have won many titles. Priscilla had seven, and all good, genuine ones. They are the revealers of her life's story.

1. *Priscilla the Christian.* She was married in Pontus to Aquila, one of her own nation, and then the young couple set out to see the world and make their fortune. At last they settled down in Rome. One day Aquila came home and whispered in her ear, "We must fly! the Emperor commands it." What! and leave their sunny home? leave their little circle of friends? Yes. Hurriedly they must pack together what they can carry, and haste away—away, for life is precious. But where shall they go? Their thoughts revert to the old home, and thitherwards their steps are turned. By-and-by they reach Corinth; here they stay awhile to earn a little money, not wishing to appear in Pontus as destitute wanderers.

"Why were they thus driven about?" no doubt Priscilla often asked. "Why did God permit it?" How often we, too, breathe out that word, "Why?" Sometimes the coming years give back the answer, though not always. But Priscilla was quickly answered. One day there came to their door a worn-looking man seeking work. Yes, they wanted another hand—and yes, they had no objection to his lodging with them. After a few days we can fancy that Priscilla, with her keen woman's intuition, said to her husband, "I cannot understand our lodger; he seems weak, yet strong; unknown, yet well known; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making some seem rich; having nothing, yet apparently possessing all things!" But in a little while Priscilla found out the secret. When she learnt to understand Christ, she understood Paul, and understood some of God's ways towards her. She had lost her home in Rome, but found Christ at Corinth. When we working, toiling women see Christ as He is, our loving Helper, oh, the flood of sunshine that streams in! All things stand out in a different light. When Priscilla won the title of Christian, she began her true life. We have not lived up to half our life, or half our possibilities, till we have won that honoured title.

2. *Priscilla the Tent-maker.* If you look at Paul's account of her you will distinctly read the words, "They were tent-makers." Therefore it is of little use anyone saying it was only Aquila who worked at this trade. So when I think of Sister Priscilla, it is of a woman with red, rough hands, who knew what hard work was. No doubt she did the cutting out and the finishing off, so that all tents that left Priscilla's shop were neat and well finished. That work was not like sewing silk flounces, or embroidering sunflowers on curtains. It was hard, real work. It is this which draws me to Sister Priscilla. I feel she is my sister, and when her story speaks to me, it is not the voice of a woman from a high station, who knows nothing of my struggles, and who only speaks in a patronising, condescending manner, but as of one tempted and tried like I am. And after all, what a grand thing it is to be a working woman, to feel that one is an active member in God's great workroom!

3. *Priscilla the Helper.* Paul calls her, in his letter to the Romans, "my helper." Sometimes a querulous mother will say to her child, "Get along, I'm too busy." We should not like to think of our Heavenly Father ever treating His children like that. We love to think of Christ as not only our Healer, but also our Helper, and Priscilla copied her Master in this respect. In a beautiful room at Rome there is a splendid picture painted on the lofty ceiling. But visitors found it difficult to get at the proper angle of vision, and lost many of its charms. To avoid this, a large mirror has been placed on the floor, which reflects the scene above, and by looking into it visitors see beauties

IN GOLDEN SPRING.

WINTER hence is winging with a kind farewell;
Spring is beauty bringing unto hill and dell.
Brooklets blend their voices, rippling through the plain,
All the land rejoices, sunlight smiles again.

Infant-buds are beaming trees and hedges o'er;
Woodland-ways are gleaming with a golden store.
Glen and glade are shining, where on fairy feet—
Sunny garlands twining—steals the primrose sweet.

Love Divine for ever spring of comfort sends;
Night endureth never, every winter ends.
Yea, each storm-wind beating through the darksome hours
Promise is repeating of the coming flowers.

When 'tis winter near thee, fear not, pilgrim-heart!
Heav'nly light shall cheer thee—sunward bound thou art!
Unto God thanksgiving shall thy spirit breathe;
Flow'rets ever-living yet shall round thee wreathe.

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

unobservable before. Priscilla reflected her Master, and others, seeing her good works, glorified her Master. What exactly she did for Paul we know not; whether it was she mended his sandals, or wrote his letters, or did some kind of spiritual work.

Help can never be measured by ordinary rules. The tying of a boot-lace may be of as great service as the launching of a lifeboat. And how our ability and opportunities to help increase! Sitting out of doors one warm June day, I heard such a busy hubbub of noise, and I knew it came from quite a colony of enterprising bees hard at work. The noise reminded me of a factory, and of course it was a factory—a honey factory. Now, where do you think that factory was to be found—within whose green walls? That holly tree? Not a bit of it. No, but overhead where I was sitting were the boughs of an old hawthorn, white with summer snow, and it was there the honey factory was. Bees don't trouble holly bushes. To be known by our helpfulness, to be attractive by our sweetness, is worthy of a woman's ambition.

4. *Priscilla the Teacher.* And quite a noted teacher, too! Her workroom was a college, herself a professor, and her pupil the eloquent Apollos. This working woman taught the great orator "the way of God more perfectly." She reminds us of the pious women of Elstow, whose conversation led to the conversion of Bunyan; of Mr. Spurgeon's mother, who prayed both for and *with* her boys. Thank God there are women in England who follow Priscilla's example. A poor widow woman in a little town in Essex regularly on Sunday afternoons invites her neighbours into her house, and then they have a prayer-meeting together. "I used to long for some one to talk to me of Jesus," wrote a woman who had passed nearly twenty years in a nunnery. It is said that woman has two weapons, tact and tongue. Would that we used the latter more often in teaching of Jesus!

5. *Priscilla the Home-maker.* "Where is your home?" was asked a child. "Where mother is," was the true answer. "What is a model home like?" might be asked, and the answer would be, "Where the mother is a Christian, and where there is a church in the home." A church is simply where a number of believers are, few or many, and where Christ dwells with them. How sweet to think of Christ dwelling amongst those humble tent-makers! The grandfather of the Earl of Aberdeen nearly ruined himself in preparing for a visit from the Queen, but the Lord of Glory will dwell in the lowliest cottage. "But," says one, "it is true enough Paul mentions 'the church that is in their house,' yet it may have been chiefly through the efforts of her husband Aquila." Maybe, but we think not, for two reasons. Paul mentions this worthy couple in his writings three times; once he calls them "Aquila and Priscilla," but twice he says, "Priscilla and Aquila." Think you there was no motive in that? Then we have heard of a Christian wife having a church in her home in spite of a worldly husband, but never of the contrary case. No, to us women has been committed the power of home-making or home-marring.

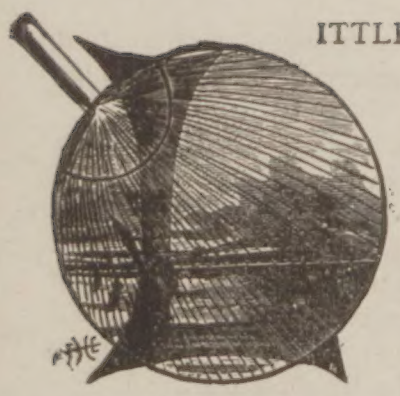
6. *Priscilla the Brave.* "Who have for my life laid down their own necks," are Paul's emphatic words. It required bravery in those days even to be a Christian. About the time of Priscilla's second visit to Rome, the first stone Coliseum was built. On the day of the opening, there was a grand display of wild beasts, and many Christians were thrown to them. The Emperor called for the architect, to crown him with the laurel crown. When the man saw the cruel scene in the arena below, he cried out with a loud voice, "I, too, am a Christian!" "To the lions with him! To the lions!" shouted the angry mob, and to the lions they threw him, to win thereby the immortal crown. That was in the days when Priscilla was a Christian. Would you have been brave enough? would I? Then she was not only brave in confessing, but in defending. How much we should like the full story of how she put her own life in jeopardy to save Paul's! The spirit of self-sacrifice was hers to a large degree. "I wish I were brave enough to confess Christ more openly; to defend His cause more boldly; to speak oftener for Him!" sighs many a woman. Such bravery is only obtainable as self is put out of sight and Christ becomes our chief desire.

7. *Priscilla the Loyal.* "It will not last long," perhaps some of her neighbours said when she became a Christian; "it's a new craze of which she will soon tire." Paul knew what it was to find the love of friends grow cold, but did he find Priscilla change? Nay; read his last message to her in his second letter to Timothy. He was then in Rome himself, but Priscilla had left Rome again and was at Ephesus. Paul was in a lonely prison, daily awaiting the tyrant Nero's pleasure. His thoughts go back to the friends of long ago, and the first name mentioned is Priscilla's. And it should be noticed that this aged man, thinking of this faithful friend whose love had stood the test of eighteen years, uses the abbreviated form of her name, Prisca. We always give people their names in full when there is a coolness between us. It is only love that finds out the euphony of short names. Where are *our* friends of years ago? Do we not too often let our friends slip from us through lack of loving messages, or through the magnifying of small faults? And Priscilla was not only loyal to earthly friends, but to her Master too. Time had whitened her hair, had taken from her the agility of youth, had robbed her of friends, had turned the gold of life to grey, but her love was still the same—nay, more, for with the passing years it had grown too.

Such is the record of Sister Priscilla's life. What will the record of ours be like?

BRAVING IT OUT.

A Study for Mothers.



LITTLE Betty Galloway, aged five, came home from kindergarten at twelve o'clock, bright and happy, without the smallest intention of doing anything wrong. She hung up her hat, and bounded away to the nursery to have a frolic with the baby. But Susan, the maid, looked in from an adjoining room and said tiny Mary was in bed, and mamma had left orders to have the house kept very quiet.

Betty sobered down at once, and presently, walking on tiptoe, concluded that she might as well explore the house, to see what had happened during her absence at school. No one was to be seen, and, naturally enough, in her wanderings she gravitated towards the pantry.

What was that on the shelf? Oh, a big, new cake with chocolate frosting! It was intended for a grand party that evening, and had been set near the window to cool. Betty wondered if it were cooling properly. She stood first on one foot, then on the other, gazing admiringly, and thinking she had never seen a cake just like that before, so very large and brown and smooth.

"Tastes like choclid drops, I s'pose. No, like caramels. I wish I knew how it does taste!"

She continued to gaze.

"Would mamma mind if I touched it with my finger—my *littlest* finger—just to see if it's hard?"

Ah, temptation, as old as the days of Eden, why did not this weak little mortal resist it? Betty lingered.

Was the frosting hard or soft? That was the absorbing question. "I wouldn't hurt it for nuffin in this world," said the young Eve, putting forth a cautious finger.

"Why, 'tis just as so—oft!"

Delightful! And, being soft, a scrap adhered to that "littlest finger," only "a teeny-tiny bit," and what could Betty do with it but slip it into her mouth?

"'Tis like choclid drops. No, I don't know; perhaps it's like caramels. Can't tell unless I have a bigger piece."

This was certainly reasonable. In went that finger again—not very deep, and it was so tiny a finger, too! The hole it made was no deeper than a dimple. Betty felt sure it would escape notice, though sorry it chanced to be on the very top of the cake. Wouldn't it have been better at one side? To make sure she tried it. Yes, that was better, but perhaps she could reach further yet by standing on tip-toe; it was worth trying.

Betty was a child of resources and perseverance, and did not leave the pantry till she had made thorough work with the cake, though careful to smooth it over after her depredations—"so that no one would think fingers had touched it."

It really never entered her infant mind that she had done any serious mischief till she was arraigned that afternoon before a rightly indignant mamma.

Mrs. Galloway had been extremely mortified when she went to look at her cake and discovered it in so damaged a condition that it could not be set on the table whole, but must be cut in small pieces.

"I did not think I had so naughty a little girl," said she, in a calmly terrible voice—"so meddlesome, so wicked."

Betty's eyelashes quivered, but she made no attempt to deny the charge, or even to defend herself.

"Oh, mamma," said she, appalled by the enormous guilt thus suddenly brought home to her, "what does make me do such naughty things?" Then, dropping her voice to an awed whisper, "Is it God?"

"What, the good God, my dear child? What can you mean by such a question?"

"I don't know," gasped Betty. "Only—oh, mamma, it don't seem as if it was me!"

Here was casuistry in embryo.

"Yes, it was you. It was my own little Betty, though I must say, I never knew you to do the like before."

The child sighed heavily. "I don't see," said she, laying her little fat hand on her chest—"I don't see how such naughty things get into my——" she paused, unable to recall the seat of the emotions—"into my stomach."

Mrs. Galloway smiled inwardly, but her stern demeanour remained unchanged. She was considered a most judicious mother, but in this case she had been deeply vexed and could not see that her child was now suffering real contrition, and needed to be dealt with very gently.

"What must mamma do to punish her little girl, and make her remember not to do such a dreadful thing again? Go to bed, and we will talk about it to-morrow morning."

There was no danger of mamma's forgetting; she never forgot. Betty was called to her side after breakfast next morning to receive her sentence.

"I think I shall have to take these naughty hands and tie them behind my little girl's back and keep her at home from school to-day."

The hands were tied, but Betty shed no tears, and made no remonstrance. "Must I stay in the house, mamma?" was all she said. She dearly loved her school, and this apparent indifference was quite surprising.

"No, you may go for a little walk, but if anyone asks you why your hands are tied you must say that you have been a naughty girl."

Mrs. Galloway thought this would bring the tears if anything, as the child liked to stand well with the neighbours, who made a great pet of her; but Betty only tossed her head nonchalantly, and began to sing.

It was most discouraging. All day, except when her hands were untied at dinner-time, she roved about from house to house in a sort of triumphal march. Her mother could hear her talking to the ladies near by.

"I was a naughty girl, but I shan't do so any more. Mamma will untie my hands when I eat my supper."

Mrs. Galloway sighed at such obduracy. Of what avail was punishment when received in this spirit?

The doctor was sent for to see baby Mary, and when he entered he laughed at the droll spectacle of a little girl dancing and crowing, with arms pinioned, to amuse the baby.

"Why, what's this, Betty? What's going on here?"

"Oh, I was a naughty girl—shan't do so any more," replied Betty, gaily.

The doctor was especially fond of the bright little maid, and always had a merry word and a smile for her; but now he said, frowning—

"You need not stay here while I look at baby's tongue, then. I don't like to have naughty girls in the room."

It was his first harsh word, and the child was very sensitive. Mrs. Galloway thought she would surely break down, but, strange to say, she ran away with a hop and a skip, and presently was heard singing in the hall.

"It is most extraordinary, Dr. Blake. I thought I was punishing her, but it is not so. What shall I do next?"

The doctor, who was an intimate friend of the family, answered as readily as if it had been a question of microbes—

"She enjoys the novelty, you see; but she'll tire of the thing before night, or if she doesn't, just try the same treatment to-morrow. You're on the right track."

Sage doctor! sage mother! The child did not "tire of it" that night; she went to bed in high spirits, although warned that her hands would be tied again the following day.

But—and this is a true story—what did happen was the unexpected. Before morning Betty was ill with all the symptoms of an approaching fever. Alarmed, the mother summoned Dr. Blake, who was puzzled at first, but soon called Mrs. Galloway aside and said shamefacedly—

"My dear woman, this is a case of pure nervous exhaustion, brought on by agony of mind. The poor little thing braved it out nobly yesterday, but it has proved too much for her, and this is the result."

Tears sprang to the mother's eyes.

"So it was pride that kept her up when we thought it was indifference—the dear little martyr! I was breaking a bruised reed and never knew it."

The child soon rallied, but Mrs. Galloway did not leave her the next day to attend her Browning Club.

"Never mind," said she to the doctor. "They call Browning very obscure, but I believe I know more about him this minute than I know about my small daughter. I've come to the conclusion that there is nothing in the world so intricate and delicate and at the same time so fascinating to study as the inner workings of a little child's mind."

"There I agree with you," said the doctor, touching Betty's hot brow with his lips reverently.

SOPHIE MAY.

SHADOWED HOMES.

SHADOWED homes! Who does not know them?—homes where, perhaps, but a short time ago all was brightness and gladness and sunshine, and where now all is darkness and sadness and sorrow. Some sudden calamity has befallen the household; it may be an unexpected reverse of fortune; or the breath of suspicion may have dimmed the brightness of some dear one's character; or one may have been laid low with a sudden illness; or, perhaps, even the dread angel of death may have entered the home. Whatever it be, the shadow is there; and when we see the pained faces of the stricken ones, and note the sadness that seems to brood over all that surrounds them, we are constrained to pray that the shadow may soon be lifted—that God will soon send His blessed sunshine to chase away the darkness.

To the inmates of any shadowed homes into which the MOTHERS' COMPANION may find its way we should like to say a few words.

Why is your home shadowed? Is it through some fault of your own?—is the sadness that surrounds you simply the shadow of some dark sin? If so, do you know that there is only *one way* by which you can be freed from the shadow? Go to the loving Father of us all, and in real contrition and humbleness of heart pour out your trouble before Him. Be sorry for your sin, and He will help you. For our Lord Jesus Christ's sake He will grant you the pardon which alone can really lift the shadow from your heart and home, and He will remember the sin no more. You can obtain relief in no other way.

But, perhaps, you are conscious of no special reason for the sorrow that is weighing heavily upon you. Be assured, nevertheless, that there *is* a reason, for God doth not willingly afflict the children of men, and it is not His pleasure that our lives should be shadowed. Take heart, then, and be of a good courage, remembering that whom God *loveth* He correcteth, and that though the purpose of His chastening may not be plain now, yet in His own good time it will be revealed.

What effect is the shadow having upon you? Is it drawing you nearer to God, or is it causing you to harden your heart against Him? If the latter be your case, oh, I pray you stay and consider what you are doing in thus shutting God out of your life. Reflect for a moment on the foolishness of the course you are pursuing. If, after punishing one of your children for some grievous fault, the little one were to turn away from you with a shake or a pout and refuse to be loved again, what would you think? Would not your first thought be one of pity for the child? "Poor little fellow," you would say, "he does not know how necessary that punishment was, and so he avoids me for having caused him pain; but some day, if he lives, he will thank me for it." And would you love your child any the less because you had had to punish him? Nay, but it was your very love that compelled the punishment.

May we not with all reverence look upon God's chastenings somewhat in this light? It is solely for our highest good that He permits the sorrows that sometimes darken our lives. If we could only believe that always, and act up to our belief when God's hand is heavy upon us, how much happier we might be! "No chastening," we are told, "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. xii. 11). Let us, then, try to look on to the *afterward*. That will surely help us to bear the sting of the present.

We have no room to speak of the particular sorrows that afflict mankind. The most common, perhaps, of all is bereavement. And yet even the black cloud of death has its rifts through which the bright sunshine of God's love and mercy finds its way. The mother mourning for her little one, the wife for her husband, the friend for the friend, must, if their faith be real, be brought nearer to heaven by the thought that those whom they love are in the Father's home. And since our Saviour has conquered death and the grave, can we not fearlessly look beyond the dark shadows, even to the shining of the perfect and eternal day?

We have left but little space to devote to our picture. Perhaps, however, it is better so. There are some pictures that are best left to speak for themselves; and at all events in this case it does not seem necessary to add to the artist's own eloquence. The picture must surely appeal strongly to the sympathies of all who see it. The home from which that sad little procession of mourners has come is, indeed, grievously shadowed. God grant that they sorrow not as those who have no hope. May He in His infinite mercy comfort them and all who mourn!

D.

A Baby's Funeral in Holland.

IS STAMMERING CURABLE?

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

NOT such a great number of years ago, to have put such a question as the above would have been considered a mere waste of breath. Away up in the north of Scotland, when I was a boy, very strange ideas used to prevail regarding this trouble. The commonest notion was that it was sent as an infliction upon the parents for some unforgiven sins. But this was in the fifties and sixties. We are now in the nineties, and our increase in medical and surgical knowledge is extending by strides. And as to stammering and stuttering, difficult though a cure may be, often vexatiously so, we do not despair of curing or improving even the worst cases of this painful affection.

But there is one thing I desire to impress upon parents and others having the care of children who exhibit a tendency to this defect, and that is that there is no specific cure for it. I mean you to understand that the treatment must vary in almost every case according to the causes and to the idiosyncracy of the patient. It would be very delightful indeed if we could come boldly forward and say to our stammering patients, one and all, "Do this or do that, and it will assuredly cure you." The reader, no doubt, remembers the tradition of the great Grecian scholar, who, though burning to become an orator—which he afterwards did become—found he could not give voice or tongue to the thoughts that were within him owing to this awful affliction. And how he was advised to go to the seaside and address his first speeches to the ocean, *taking time to talk*, and holding a pebble in his mouth. It must have been amusing to have heard him declaiming thus: "Wh—what are the w—w—wild w—w—waves saying?"

The wild waves might have replied, "What in the name of mystery are *you* trying to say, my man?"

But even this story is not without its lesson. I don't advise my patients to put pebbles in their mouths while trying to get over stammering, for pebbles have a way of slipping down one's throat that isn't agreeable, *but taking time to talk, talking by the sea*, and breathing the bracing sea air would all help towards a cure. Debility and nervousness are two common causes of this complaint; well, the sea breezes tend to remove the former, and talking to the sea the latter.

Stuttering and stammering are allied complaints. The difference is this: in stammering the defect lies in the larynx or throat, or posterior part of the mouth, and the difficulty here lies in producing certain voice sounds; in stuttering, again, there is more contortion of the facial muscles, because the great struggle lies in pronouncing certain letters, the defect lying, therefore, in the mouth. But the cure is, to a great extent, similar.

The predisposing causes of stammering are many. Let me say at once that in every case the mouth and throat should be examined, and if there be any malformation, the best surgical assistance possible should be immediately procured. Bad health is a frequent predisposing cause, and parents themselves must observe that when a child is somewhat below par, he stammers more than when well and strong. Insufficient or injudicious diet is a frequent cause of the complaint, as this tends to weaken the whole system, including, of course, the delicate muscles that form the organs of voice and of speech. Again, the beginning of the mischief often dates back to some marked period of ill-health or sickness, such as measles or scarlatina.

The fear that produces nervousness as well as that kind of hysterical feeling not uncommon in weakly children, and which is all too often caused by unthinking and unkind treatment on the part of parents or teachers, is a fruitful cause of stammering.

I may add that cases of both stammering and stuttering have been much on the increase of late years.

But no matter what the cause may be, the cure should be undertaken, and that, too, as early as possible.

Stammering is hereditary in some families, and many children in the same family may be similarly afflicted. In such cases as these, the very young should not be allowed to keep the company of the others, or they are bound to grow up with the same defect. In fact, the evil habit of imitation or mocking has often resulted in bringing on a defect of speech that otherwise would have been avoided.

But now as to an attempted cure. It will be necessary at the very outset to get the child into a healthy habit of body. He must be made strong. Individually, I cannot say how this may be done, but there are general rules that all should see obeyed. Good, nourishing, and regular diet is a *sine quâ non* in the restoration of health. Fresh air comes next, and is almost of equal importance. With this should be combined exercise, *out of doors*, and it must be exercise of a pleasurable kind. Whatever worries or annoys the child will increase the disorder, or at all events, hinder the cure. Even books and study should be dispensed with for a time, except in so far as reading enters into the plan of treatment adopted.

In the case of pale, bloodless children, some simple iron tonic should be given. Parrish's chemical food is excellent in such cases, and so is cod-liver oil.

Do not make the all too common error, however, of supposing that because your boy or girl is plump or fat, he or she is necessarily in good health. A healthy child should be hard and firm, and ruddy, even brown in summer, as well as on the best of terms with himself and all nature around him.

A month or two at the seaside will often give the very first start that shall lead to cure. But it must not be forgotten that all cases are subject to relapse for months, or even years, after the patient is well.

Remember that in your plan of treatment you must first and foremost completely gain the child's confidence. To do so you must exert all your patience. In making him read passages to you slowly over and over again—and this must be done daily—you must beware of excitement, or hurry, either in yourself or the little patient.

The letters that are probably the most frequent stumbling-blocks are P and B. Well, in coming to a word of difficulty, do not let him hurry over it. Smiling, hold up a finger and stop him. Let him begin the sentence over again. And mark this word, and all such words, exercising him slowly but frequently over them till he can pronounce them perfectly.

It is in this *training* to pronounce difficult words that

the whole secret of success lies. Whatever be the first consonants of a word which he haggles over, write out for him a whole list of short words beginning with these letters, be they P's, B's, F's, N's, T's, D's, or any other, and let these short words be each followed by a vowel with a different sound.

Constant practice for an hour or two daily for a few months with such words will, in almost every case, work wonders. As he gets better able to speak he will gain confidence, become more happy, and the nervousness will leave him.

Perseverance must be the motto of the teacher and patient also.

Frequent recitations are another portion of the treatment, and so are music and singing.

The cure, then, lies in attention to health, in training daily with the difficult consonants and vowel-sounds, in the careful avoidance of hurry, and in steady, plodding perseverance.

FOR MOTHERS AND WIVES.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

To Prevent Children Throwing Off the Bed Clothes when Asleep.

Mothers are sometimes made uneasy because their children when asleep throw out their arms and displace the bed clothes, thus running the risk of taking cold. The following is a simple way of preventing this. Take about three quarters of a yard of broad white garter elastic, and cut it in two. Fasten these two pieces on the top edge of the blanket, leaving enough space for the child to lie comfortably and easily between them. In the same place, and over the elastic, sew two large buttons. Two button-holes must be made at the opposite ends of the elastic. When the child is asleep pass the button-hole end of the elastic round the bars of the bed, and button. Being elastic, it will give, and the child can turn in bed without becoming uncovered. If it is desirable to secure the sheet as well as the blanket, two loops of tape may be sewn on the hem of the sheet, and the elastic can be slipped through these before it is passed round the bars of the bed.

How to Keep Young.

"A woman's day is over by the time she is sixty," said, somewhat sadly, an intelligent, capable mother of a family the other day. Yet Oliver Wendell Holmes declared not long ago that "to be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old." But how is a woman to keep young as the years go by? The question is difficult. It is very certain, however, that one way of keeping young is to maintain an interest in the life of every day. The women who, whether by compulsion or otherwise, lay aside their tools, and give themselves up to rest, very soon end by giving up altogether. Rest that is a change from work is delightful; rest that is the business of life is but wearisome. Another way of keeping young is to follow after charity. "It is not for having kept me alive so long that I thank God," said a charming grandmother of eighty, "but for having kept me kind-hearted, gentle, and full of feeling." Another way of keeping young is to be in sympathy with the young. John Stuart Mill used to say that he had never known any to be happy when old, who were not able to live over again in the pleasures of the young.

Take Care of the Children's Eyes.

It is much more usual now than in former times for children to wear spectacles, the discovery having been made that there is something wrong with their sight. Pessimists argue on this account that the race is slowly going blind. We are doing nothing of the sort, however. The real explanation of the novelty is that parents are becoming more sensible than they formerly were. They know better than they once did what children need, and doctors know better than ever before how to treat the eye. An authority said not long ago that out of every hundred pairs of eyes born into the world, seventy-five need spectacles of some kind, though forty out of the seventy-five do not know it. The individuals who own these eyes have no idea of the sort of world they live in. If they could be unexpectedly fitted with the right glasses they would be astonished at what they saw.

In a great many cases childhood is the "accepted time" for curing defective sight. At the commencement of a squint, for instance, proper spectacles will very often put everything to rights, and prevent the need of an operation; whereas if the mischief is allowed to continue, what was trifling may become serious. Mothers have to remember that difficulty in seeing is only one of the signs of something being wrong with the eyes. From the same cause proceed also certain forms of sick headache and neuralgia, and what are known as "nervous complaints." Only a clever oculist, however, could say what ought to be done in these cases. A child who could be treated properly in the early stages of the mischief, might escape both pain and trouble.

When there is something wrong with a child's eyes it is most important that the correct spectacles should be worn. Nothing can be more foolish than for a parent to take a child into a shop, let him "try on" a few spectacles, as he would try on a hat or a jacket, and purchase those through which he may see best. A skilful oculist said not long ago, "The habit of buying a glass which seems to be best without knowing what is really needed, is responsible for more eye trouble than any other one thing I can think of. Especially is it dangerous for people to choose their own glasses in cases of near sight, a form of eye weakness very common among children. In this form of trouble children naturally prefer the glasses through which they can see the most, and this glass is almost certain to be too strong. A glass which is too powerful injures the sight instead of strengthening it."

"The light of the body is the eye," and when children are so fortunate as to own good eyes, they ought to be taught to take care of them. There are two or three ways in which the sight may be preserved.

When reading or writing, take a position in which the light will fall on the paper or the work obliquely, leaving the eyes themselves somewhat in the shade. Do not sit opposite the light, so that it will fall on the eyes.

Avoid sudden changes from darkness to strong light.

Never look at the sun or at a strong light until its image remains in the eye when looking away.

Never try to read when lying down. One reason why

reading in bed is objectionable is that it is bad for the eyes.

If possible, have beds so placed that the light will not fall directly on the eyes of the sleeper.

Be careful not to over-tax the sight when recovering from illness.

Do not try to read or work by a poor or fading or uncertain light.

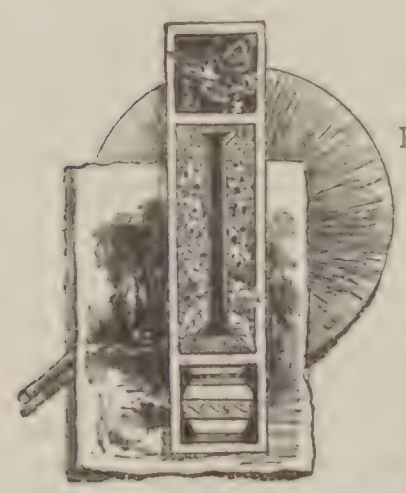
Do not form a habit of washing the eyes by holding them open in water. A skilful surgeon said not long ago that the prevalent belief that this practice was beneficial to the sight was a fallacy. Nature has supplied the eye with a fluid which keeps the inside of the eye clear.

A Hint to Home Laundresses.

Flat irons which are once allowed to become red hot are spoilt. They never run quite so smoothly afterwards. It is desirable that articles should be ironed until they are dry. If left damp, and hung to dry before the fire, they will look rough when finished. It is best to iron with the thread parallel with the selvage. To work otherwise makes articles look baggy.

Recipe: Lemon Tart.

Where the use of pastry is approved, a pleasant change in ordinary homely fare may be obtained by making lemon tart. Line a shallow tin dish with good crust, and cover it to the border with slices of fresh lemon, which have been peeled and freed entirely from the white pith and from pips. Sprinkle moist sugar over the lemons, and pour half a cupful of golden syrup over this. Put on a top crust, fasten the edges of the tart securely, so that the juice cannot escape, and bake. Send the tart to table in the dish in which it was cooked.



AUNT LUCY'S ESCAPES.

Founded on Fact.

"PITY you, Lucy," said my elder sister, when she read the telegram which summoned me to take charge of my brother's little son, after his mother's death. "All boys are tiresome, but that boy beats all I ever met. He is as mischievous as a monkey and as lively as an eel. You'll never be able to manage him."

"Never is a long day," I said, sadly, for I did not like the prospect before me. "I'll have a good try anyway. You know more about children than I do, Millie. Which do you think is the best way to make them mind?"

"Oh, they are all different," said Millie, laughing. "Some of them you can get at through their hearts, some through their heads, and some through their stomachs. I never knew a boy yet who didn't grow penitent when there was a chance of being docked of his pudding. Take my advice, and try that first, and the cane second. Good-bye, dear. You'll be grey when I see you again. I should have been snow-white years ago if I had not had such a good nurse."

I left the house with a heavy heart, and yet it seemed to me that Millie was wrong in her estimate of children. Certainly she had not as yet gained either the love or obedience of her three little ones. They were all happier in the nursery than in the drawing-room, and when they were naughty it was always nurse who came to the rescue and restored them to order and penitence.

We all of us have our ideals. We know the kind of mother we should like to be, and the kind of children we should like to have, and we all have our pet theories for the management of them, our husbands, and ourselves. How differently it all turns out when the husband and children are facts, and stubborn ones into the bargain!

I was not an exception to the general rule, and when I was tormented by my sister's badly-managed children, I used to think what patterns I would make of mine if ever I had any. But now that I was in the train, going to play the part of a mother to my brother's only child, all my theories seemed worthless, and I could only pray to God to show me, day by day, what I ought to do.

"Hurrah! Here's Aunt Lucy," shouted little Harold, as I entered the hall. A pair of short arms were thrown round my neck, and a pair of dancing eyes looked into mine, and I made up my mind that it was through his heart that I should reach Harold.

Novelty is always charming, they say; and perhaps it was this that kept Harold good for some days; but at the end of a week the mischievous spirit began to rebel at its long imprisonment, and struggle to get free. Things were mysteriously lost; my gloves and bonnet showed a sudden taste for wandering, which was certainly as new as it was unpleasant. So long as the tricks were harmless, I thought it best to say nothing to Harold, but when I found a whole army of snails in my bed, I thought it time to stop his pranks.

"How would you like to find a lot of slimy things in your bed?" I asked him the next day.

"Not at all, auntie," he said, truthfully enough.

"Then try to do as you would like to be done to," I added. "Besides, it is unkind to the snails."

"I never thought of that," said Harold, evidently more grieved for the snails' feelings than mine.

"Well, I won't punish you this time," I said; "but next time you play a trick like that I must."

Things went on quietly for a little while longer, and then the child did something which might have cost me my life.

We used oil-stoves for warming the bath-room and hall. The one in the bath-room was lighted during the winter at six o'clock in the morning, and kept alight until I had had my bath.

One night I had slept very badly. Harold had been more than usually tiresome during that day, and I lay awake wondering whether I had done right to undertake the charge of him. I had prayerfully, earnestly tried to do my best, and yet I did not seem to have gained ground at all.

When the early morning came, I began to feel drowsy. The bath-room opened out of mine, and there were four ventilating holes cut in the door between the two rooms. I heard nurse light the lamp, and I heard Harold some time afterwards go in with her for his bath, and then I suppose I must have fallen asleep.

It was half-past eight when I was roused from a most delightful slumber, which really was fast approaching stupor, by the housemaid shaking me.

"What's the matter?" I said, fretfully. "I was sleeping so nicely."

"Get up, miss," said Mary, shaking me again. "It's a mercy you wasn't choked in your bed. That's one of Master Harold's tricks again."

I sat up in bed, and looked round in amazement. The windows were wide open in my room and the bath-room, yet I, who wake at the faintest sound, had never heard it done. The room was densely thick with smoke, which hung on the paper like soot. Well might I ask, "What's the matter?"

"Why, Master Harold slipped back into the bath-room and turned the lamp up ever so high, and then went out and shut the door. If it hadn't been for me coming to see why you wasn't down to prayers as usual, you'd have been suffocated—that you would. Master will give that wicked boy a flogging—I know he will. I'll go and tell him all about it."

I dressed as quickly as I could, and hurried down to my brother, who was just fetching a cane from his study.

"What are you going to do with that?" I asked, catching sight of Harold crouching in a corner of the dining-room.

"I'm going to thrash that boy," said my brother, in a stern voice.

"Have you asked him if he's sorry?" I asked, holding him back. "Hear what he has to say first. I can't believe Harold meant to kill me."

With a loud cry of pain, the poor boy sprang from his corner, and threw himself into my arms.

"I'll take the whipping, auntie; but please don't think I ever meant to hurt you. I only did it in fun."

Then the little fellow sobbed as if his heart would break. He did not get his whipping, but after breakfast I took him into the morning room and tried to show him the "more excellent way" of love which will shrink from working harm to anyone.

I know now that I won his heart for ever that day, and when at length he lay quietly sleeping in my lap, oh! how thankful I felt that I had saved him from being beaten. There always has seemed to me something cowardly in a man or woman striking a little child.

I have barely space to tell you how that child rewarded me, how he gave back to me the life he had nearly taken away. It was about a year afterwards, when he had grown to love me deeply and to follow me about almost like my shadow. I was showing him some tricks with a half-sovereign, just before he went to bed one winter's evening.

Somehow the coin slipped down my throat, and stuck there. He was terrified by my frantic efforts to get rid of it, and rushed for the servants, who stood almost paralysed with fear, then tried first one means and then another of getting at the coin.

I became almost unconscious, and was nearly choking, when, to our joy, the doctor walked in, and succeeded in extracting the half-sovereign.

"Another five minutes," he said, "and I should have been too late."

"How did you know there was anything the matter?" I asked.

"Your little nephew came. He was covered with snow, and had not even stopped to put a coat or hat on. He'd better be looked after now. I thought you had sent him."

A hot bath and a basin of gruel saved the little hero, for hero he was. Timid of being out alone at any hour, and doubly so of being out in the dark, what an effort it must have been to him to go out alone that snowy night! As I kissed him in bed, and thanked him for his thoughtfulness, he whispered—

"It was cold and dark, auntie; but you believe now that I love you, don't you?"

Oh, how glad I was he never had that whipping!

E. M. WATERWORTH.

"He lay quietly sleeping in my lap."

CHEERFULNESS.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE.

CHEERFULNESS may almost be said to be the "philosopher's stone" as far as daily home life is concerned. Its value is priceless, and it blesses its possessors alike as it does all with whom they come into contact.

As one looks around at the world in general, one cannot but see how great an influence a cheerful person has, and that that influence is a good one. Depressed and morbid people infect others with their own dismal views and feelings; while, on the other hand, the glad make others see life through rose-coloured spectacles, simply by refusing to look through any others themselves. This does by no means imply that the cheerful person is unsympathetic and cold as regards the woes of others, or is so insensitive as never to weep at his own. No; the cheerfulness that is as a ray from the Sun of Righteousness Himself leads its possessor to weep with those who weep, as well as to be glad with the rejoicing.

In Mr. Ruskin's book, "Christ's Folk in the Apennines," there is a very sweet thought of a humble woman on the subject. The Tuscan peasant said there was no reason why each of us should not have *two paradises*—one in this world, and one in the next; and "as for myself," she added, "I trust in my Lord about everything, and I think that is why I get on so well."

This, truly, was having the "merry heart" that "doeth good like a medicine." And most true it is that the patient and cheerful endurance of the ills of life, great and small, and the determinate looking on the bright side make and keep the body in health, besides tending to the well-being of both mind and soul.

A writer of the day says: "Evenness of mind, to the sensitive, nervous temperament, depends very much upon order. Regular hours of rising and of sleep; a certain broad order of duties in the day, to prevent hurry, and to give the sense of rest, of duty done—not many things undertaken, but few and finished; this is part of the self-discipline that contentment depends upon.

"Besides order of time, visible order is a great help—neatness of person, and a home with the proverbial 'place for everything, and everything in its place,' or rather restored to its place on the old-fashioned principle of clearing as we go. Visible order in its highest degree becomes highest beauty—the home full of brightness and good taste, the face and dress and bearing as pleasing as care can make them. All this outward order is a tonic for the mind.

"Then we must cultivate the power of silence, or our edifice of happiness—the work of many days, built up to shelter ourselves and others—may fall down in one hour. There must be in our recipe, added to the ingredients already stated, a small quantity of self-control in temper, and, strangely enough, an honest pretence to be cheerful produces cheerfulness perfectly genuine. Lastly, look to what we have, not to what we have not; and let not trifles vex and sadden us, since our heart is made for greater things."

Fretfulness, which, indeed, is the opposite of cheerfulness, is a sad spoiler of happiness. As Mrs. Browning says—

"Methinks we do as fretful children do,
Leaning their faces on the window-pane,
To sigh the glass dim with their own breath's stain,
And shut the sky and landscape from their view."

Cheerfulness, on the other hand, takes a wider outlook and sees beyond the pane of glass, out into the distant landscape which the sun is illumining as it emerges from the clouds which are shadowing the room. One great rule for this priceless gift is to remind oneself that the sun always is there though clouds may hide him, and that ultimately all will be for the best.

Another thing which much conduces to cheerfulness is the habit—and this can be acquired, though, perhaps, with some natures slowly—of taking pleasure in small matters. It by no means betokens a little mind to be quick to see tiny sources of pleasure and to be glad at trifling causes of joy. The sight of blue sky and sunshine, a bunch of flowers, or beautiful fruit; innocent recreation, a pleasant book, or a favourite piece of music; surely to be pleased at such things is one way of thanking the good Giver of them all.

"Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare days,
But such a heart whose pulse should be
Thy praise."

The one who is ever ready to be pleased and is happy in himself is easily amused, and here I must quote Ruskin again. He says: "Never seek amusement, but be always ready to be amused. The least thing has play in it, the slightest word wit, when your hands are busy and your heart is free. But if you make the aim of your life amusement, the day will come when all the agonies of a pantomime will not bring you an honest laugh."

One great recipe for cheerfulness is to have plenty to do. Idle people are rarely cheerful, and busy people are often quite the reverse. "That awful yawn which sleep cannot dispel" is never known by the busy individual, and for this alone cheerfulness is of benefit. It kills *ennui*.

In these days nervous depression is much to the front as a malady from which many suffer, and among the sufferers are eminently girls. When in society or amused they are bright and pleasant, but there is a great parenthesis in their home life, when dulness and depression seem rarely to leave them. It is called by one name and another, but the suffering is the same in all cases, though differing in amount, and the cure seems often very distant.

Even, regular work, of which mind and body are capable, not spasmodic fits of undue labour undertaken only now and again, should be entered on. With regular employment will come a sense of peace, and cheerfulness follows not far off.

The checking of all needless complaining is a great conducive to cheerfulness. I have often noticed how the habit of grumbling grows upon people, until, indeed, they seem to forget that they have any mercies for which to be thankful. Complaints about the weather, food, clothing, minor trials, petty vexations—all these are very small matters, but when they detract from that serenity of mind which is so beautiful and helpful, they become serious. To talk needlessly about these tiny troubles is to make them more real, whereas to ignore them often effaces them almost entirely.

"A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a l"

is true enough. Carlyle very incisively remarks, "Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its powers of endurance."

It is easy enough to be cheerful, many may say, when all is bright, but when sorrow comes it is not so easy. No one would aver for a moment that it is, but there is an old Irish saying that in a very homely way expresses what is a very valuable recipe for equanimity of mind: "If you can't take it aisy, take it as aisy as you can." To be able to feel resigned is a great mercy, but to be cheerful under trying circumstances is a greater still.

Without faith in an overruling Providence—in the

"Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will,"

cheerfulness would be impossible. With it, it is possible; and besides the fact that it makes all trouble easier to bear, it also heightens all happiness, and gives the power to receive it. In home life the cheerful member of the family is ever the one who charms the family circle, and mothers particularly can do much towards making home pleasant. Anything that tends to this is of great value, and a mother who is cheerful with her children, joining in their interests as far as she can, and ever bright and sunny, is linking them to home by a very strong chain.

THE MOTHERS OF ENGLAND.

"Take this child away, and nurse it for me."—Exodus ii. 9.

"TAKE this child, and nurse it for me,"
Thus the kindly princess spoke,
As the lovely weeping infant
In her breast soft pity woke.
"Take this child, and nurse it for Me,"
English mother, hear God say;
"'Tis a jewel I confide thee,
Do not cast the gem away."

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me,"
Shrink not from the holy task;
Help and guidance will be given
By your Father, if you ask.
Tell the little one of Jesus,
How He died his soul to free;
Let him hear of God's compassion,
Seated on his mother's knee.

Let not harshness, English mother,
Rudely crush the tender shoot,
Nor an over-weening fondness
Hinder you the weeds t' uproot.
View that lad in convict prison,
See that lovely girl a wreck;
Miseries, perhaps averted
By kind words or timely check.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me:"
Think—within your loving arms
There may lie the mighty statesman,
Or the orator that charms;
Better still, the gifted preacher,
Winning thousands for his Lord,
Or the patient missionary,
Lab'ring hard in fields abroad.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me;"
He may like his Saviour be,
Daily toiling in the workshop,
In the field or factory;
Or perhaps a lowly servant,
In the mansions of the great.
Godly English mother, train him
For the Lord, whate'er his state.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me;"
Fathers, mothers, oh, arise!
With a gentle, loving firmness,
Rear your children for the skies.
Fearless launch them on life's ocean,
Having well performed your part,
With the Saviour for their "Captain,"
And the Bible for their chart.

A MOTHER'S POWER.

A MOMENT'S work on clay tells more than an hour's labour on brick. So work on hearts should be done before they harden. During the first six or eight years of child-life mothers have chief sway; and this is the time to make the deepest and most enduring impressions on the youthful mind. Often, very often, do men and women ascribe their conversion to the prayers of holy mothers; the examples of maternal influence are countless. Solomon himself records the words of wisdom that fell from a mother's lips, and Timothy was taught the Scriptures from a child by his grandmother and his mother.

Parents may be assured that unless they earnestly seek to instil into their "Divine charges," from their earliest days, lessons of truth, goodness, kindness, and love, all too soon will the tares of the Evil One be sown. "The salvation of our children," says a well-known author, "depends in a large measure upon us. Their future course will be determined, under God, by the method of their training, by the associations in which we place them, by the books and teachers and companions that we provide for them. We sometimes hear it said that our country's future depends upon the doings of our statesmen, or upon the opinions of our thinkers, or upon the fidelity of our preachers, or upon the purity of our Churches. It depends far more upon the *character of the mothers and fathers of England.* In ten years they can do irreparable damage, or bring immortal glory to England. The progress of pure religion depends on the nature of our home life."

Mothers, then, be encouraged to "pray without ceasing" for your children. Be faithful to the little ones; you hold the key of their hearts now. If you once lose it, you would give the world to win it back. Use your opportunities before they pass. Show your children an example worthy to be followed. Let them be taught from their childhood how God has loved the world and given His Son to die for sinners. Let this most blessed truth be set before them in such ways as they can best understand, with the unceasing prayer, that by the grace of the Holy Spirit it may be the seed of a new and divine life in their souls. Parents who thus act and teach and pray, may well commit their children to Him "who delighteth in mercy."

A MOTHER'S NOTES ON DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

THERE seems to be a great tendency to make dresses very short waisted, especially those for little children, which are worn with a long skirt and short bodice. For young ladies the Empire dress with a broad sash round the waist, which gives the bodice the short-waisted appearance, is much admired, and it is certainly a becoming style for slim figures. Strange to say, dress bodices are rarely made of the same material and colour as the skirt. Silk or velvet bodices may be worn with thick woollen skirts, and silk skirts with lighter silk or shot velvet bodices. This is a very convenient fashion, as a skirt with care can be made to wear out two bodices, and the extra one can be kept for better occasions; in some cases, as many as three bodices are made to the same skirt, which is either perfectly plain or trimmed with some of the material. We see that many dress bodices have the stuff cut on the cross, and the lining cut and fitted in the usual way. The effect of this style is especially pleasing when a striped fabric is used. These bias-cut bodices are generally made without the usual back and side seams, the stuff being arranged so as to get the shape by gathering or draping the material. Of course, this only applies to the material, and not to the lining, which is cut and fitted in the ordinary manner. Many varieties are shown in skirt trimmings. We saw three tiny flounces set on, with three pleats laid each over the other, and then a plain space of about four inches. Rows of stitching are also much used on dress skirts, especially when cloth is employed.

Fig. 9.

Gay-coloured tartan plaid silk is very much used for trimming on dark dresses, and it certainly looks very effective.

Little boys' velveteen dresses look well with a sash of tartan silk, which can be made by dividing a width of silk into two, and fringing and knotting the ends. Bows for the shoulders can be made in the same way.

Fig. 10.

Velvet or silk sleeves are frequently used in stuff dresses. This is a convenient fashion when altering or renovating an old dress.

Fig. 9. Here we show a lady's dress made in fancy cloth, and trimmed with velvet, bias; or crossway strips of contrast material could be used in place of the velvet. The Swiss belt, made of velvet, is supported back and front with a piece of whalebone. Gores of contrast material are much used on dress skirts; the space is sometimes strapped over with bands and bows of ribbon. The present model has a piece of plain stuff let in up the front.

Fig. 10. This style of dress was much in favour last summer, the under-blouse being of cotton material. At the present season something warmer has to be employed, such as flannel. The over-jacket with short sleeve is made of the same material as the skirt, and is finished off at the edge with cord or bead trimming. This jacket should be lined with sateen or Italian cloth.

Fig. 11.

Fig. 11. We here show a cosy little coat for a girl from three to seven years of age. For very little girls there is a pretty diagonal cloth made in white, fawn, red, and many other shades which will do nicely for a coat of this kind. The loose under-jacket is made double-breasted, and the cape is trimmed with a soft silky edging to match the cloth. A double cape can be made, or the trimming may be put on to appear like a double cape. If the cloth is thick, this will be the better plan. The coat need not be lined throughout, facings of Italian cloth only being necessary. The garment will take from two to three yards of cloth.

Fig. 12 represents a little pinafore made in striped muslin. It will be seen that the dainty article is embroidered somewhat elaborately in coloured flourishing thread. This should not deter our readers from making one, for we have noticed pinafores simply feather-stitched with two or three rows in different colours, which look very effective. China and red make a pretty contrast, and these threads wash well. The neck and sleeve bands are made on the straight way of the stuff, and also the band at the waist. If the pinafore is to be worn over a short-waisted dress, the shoulder-straps can be made a little longer, and the waistband put on higher up.

Fig. 12.

Flat patterns can be supplied, Figs. 9, 10 and 11, 6½d. each; Fig. 12, 4½d. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.